

## **Praise for Bipartisan Deal to Strengthen the Affordable Care Act**

*Yesterday, a bipartisan agreement was announced to strengthen the Affordable Care Act. This agreement ensures payments for cost-sharing reductions for two years, provides funding for outreach and enrollment efforts, and includes a number of measures to stabilize health insurance markets.*

*Republicans praised this agreement, and will hopefully urge their leadership to allow a vote on legislation:*

**House Freedom Caucus Chair Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC):** “At this point in time, the central purpose of our discussions on healthcare should be aimed at one goal: lowering premiums for Americans. There are elements in the Alexander-Murray plan that we can build on...” [Statement, [10/17/17](#)]

**Senator John Thune (R-S.D.):** “The outline ‘is something I think will attract a good number of votes for people who want to see a near-term solution that ensures stability in the markets and enables and sets up a debate down the road.’” [Politico, [10/17/17](#)]

**Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD):** “If we don’t do this, there will be a lot of people that will not be able to afford to pay even the deductibles and copays...” [The Daily Beast, [10/17/17](#)]

**Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID):** “It’s probably a good idea for Congress to step in and at least address that part of the issue...” [Huffington Post, [10/18/17](#)]

**Senator Susan Collins (R-ME):** “I’m very pleased that Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray continue to work so hard to try to stabilize the insurance markets, to lower premiums, and to provide some stability, which is really needed. This bill may not be perfect. I would have liked to have seen a specific authorization and some seed money for reinsurance pools, which would further help to lower premiums. But this is a good package, and I hope it will be passed very quickly so it can have an impact on rates this year.” [Washington Post, [10/18/17](#)]

**Senator John McCain (R-AZ):** “I want to commend Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray for reaching a bipartisan agreement to help stabilize the individual health insurance marketplace. As I have repeatedly stressed, health care reform ought to be the product of regular order in the Senate, and the deal reached today marks a critical step towards that end. ... It is my hope that this is a sign of increased bipartisanship moving forward. I look forward to voting in support of this bill.” [Statement, [10/17/17](#)]

*Editorial boards across the country support the deal and say it would bring additional stability to health insurance markets:*

**Los Angeles Times:** [The Bipartisan Plan To Shore Up Obamacare Is Anything But A 'Bailout'](#)

“Unless they want to add roughly 20% to the insurance premiums faced by millions of their constituents, Republicans ought to work with Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.), whose draft proposal would fund the reimbursements for two years.”

“Again, if the reimbursements end, the cost will simply be passed on to those who aren't covered by employer health plans in the form of higher premiums. If that's what Republicans want for their constituents, so be it. If not, they need to drop the ‘bailout’ fiction and start working to restore the reimbursements.”

**Bloomberg View:** [Fresh Hope for Obamacare, and Bipartisanship](#)

“After several failed attempts to wreck the U.S. health-insurance system, Congress now has a bipartisan agreement to help shore it up.”

*Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 10/18/2017*

“The agreement reached by two senators -- Democrat Patty Murray of Washington and Republican Lamar Alexander of Tennessee -- would guarantee for two years the essential payments to insurers that President Donald Trump withdrew last week; those companies wouldn't then need to hike premiums by as much as 20 percent or exit the individual insurance market altogether.”

“Trump says Murray-Alexander is just a ‘short-term deal.’ But a two-year extension for the Affordable Care Act would strengthen its hold. And by demonstrating how readily the law can be tweaked in productive ways that appeal to both Democrats and Republicans, it could begin to lay a bipartisan foundation for the U.S. health-care system.”

**West Virginia Register-Herald:** [“Obamacare” Fix Would Add Market Stability](#)

“We have said all along that the ACA needs a fix, that it is not broken and that politicians should stop their grandstanding and demagoguery to negotiate details of a deal... It appears that is exactly what has happened.”

“Make no mistake: Republicans own ‘Obamacare,’ now, and the smart ones know it.”

“The Alexander-Murray plan would provide funding assurances to insurance companies, thus injecting stability in the marketplace. That, in and of itself, should help keep costs from jumping dramatically as most experts have said would happen if the Trump dump made it through.”

“...Polling shows Americans want the ACA to be fixed, not repealed and replaced. It's time for Congress to make hay while the sun shines – without the chaos.”

**The Olympian (Washington):** [ACA Survival Needs Political Good Faith](#)

“Fortunately on Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., came riding to the rescue. The senators reached a tentative bipartisan agreement on a policy repair after months of negotiating...”

“Early reports are that Trump actually supports their proposal. In flat contradiction to the president's position a week ago, he now appears to support payments to insurers on a short-term basis.... If that stays true, it is tremendous news.”

“We're encouraged that they found common ground.... Washington Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler commended the bipartisan work but also called for Trump ‘to stop declaring that the Affordable Care Act is over. That type of rhetoric is very damaging at a time when people are worried about getting health insurance.’ That is exactly right.”

**Mankato Free Press (Minnesota):** [Health Care: Trump Action Raising Prices](#)

“The bipartisan Senate plan is a necessary stopgap measure to stabilize insurance markets just as people are getting ready to sign up for insurance for next year. The House and Senate should approve it.”

***Health care experts, patient advocates, and health care organizations have spoken out in support of the deal:***

**Andy Slavitt, Former CMS Administrator:** “They have reached an agreement which preserves the ACA entirely while accomplishing three things. First, it undoes some of the harmful effects of the Trump Administration's actions by restoring CSR payments and outreach funding for the next two years, although other harmful actions by the Administration also need to be addressed. Second, it provides new health plan options and added state flexibility while maintaining important consumer protections. And third, it represents a down payment on additional bipartisan reforms to increase the affordability of coverage for Americans.”

[Washington Post, [10/18/17](#)]

**Bill Hoagland (Senior Vice President) and , Katherine Hayes (Health Policy Director), Bipartisan Policy Center:** “We applaud the tireless efforts of Sens. Alexander and Murray to reach bipartisan agreement on a near-term insurance market stabilization proposal.... We are encouraged that these leaders have come together to address the real near-term challenges that millions of Americans, and state governments, are facing to access affordable health insurance coverage. We know this was not an easy compromise. Swift congressional action on this package could help pave the way for broader, fundamental reforms to health care in America.” [Statement, [10/17/17](#)]

**Robert Greenstein, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:** “The agreement that Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray announced yesterday represents an important step toward bipartisan action on health care and away from damaging attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), radically overhaul and cut Medicaid, and take coverage away from tens of millions of people... With this agreement, policymakers have come together on a bipartisan basis to address the Administration’s efforts to undermine the ACA marketplaces.” [Release, [10/18/17](#)]

**John Rother, President and CEO, National Coalition on Health Care:** “The Alexander-Murray deal to stabilize the non-group health insurance markets is heartening news for Americans’ health care. No market, plan, provider, or family can long function with the level of uncertainty we’ve experienced over recent months. It’s long past time that a stabilization deal, as well as other key health funding measures, landed on President Trump’s desk.” [Statement, 10/17/17]

**Frederick Isasi, Executive Director, Families USA:** “We welcome the announcement and are encouraged by the news of the bipartisan health care agreement by Senators Alexander and Murray.... Senators Alexander and Murray should be applauded for reaching across the aisle to work on behalf of our nation’s families. We call on their colleagues in the Senate and House to follow their example, return to regular order, and take up this matter quickly. Our nation’s families deserve nothing less.” [Statement, [10/17/17](#)]

**Mental Health America:** “We applaud Senators Alexander and Murray for their bipartisan approach to addressing the potential chaos in health insurance markets initiated through the Executive Orders of last week.... By funding federal insurance cost-sharing contributions for two more years, insurance rates in the short-term will not skyrocket by an additional 20 percent, as would have happened if President Trump’s Executive Orders remained in place with no Congressional action.... [W]e look forward to the day when the President and Congress will move beyond the crisis management that has characterized this past year to the development of the long-term solutions that are needed to preserve access to quality care at affordable prices.” [Statement, [10/18/17](#)]

***The bipartisan agreement released yesterday strengthens the Affordable Care Act and brings stability to the markets in advance of 2018’s open enrollment period. Republican leadership ought to support this bipartisan effort and allow it to move forward.***